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10/730,887	12/10/2003	Noriko Sakashita	000466A	5155

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EXAMINER

EGWIM, KELECHI CHIDI

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1713

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**BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS
AND INTERFERENCES**

Application Number: 10/730,887
Filing Date: December 10, 2003
Appellant(s): SAKASHITA ET AL.

MAILED
JAN 25 2005
GROUP 1700

Kenneth H. Salen
For Appellant

EXAMINER'S ANSWER

This is in response to the appeal brief filed 11/02/2004.

(1) *Real Party in Interest*

A statement identifying the real party in interest is contained in the brief.

(2) *Related Appeals and Interferences*

A statement identifying the related appeals and interferences that will directly affect or be directly affected by or have a bearing on the decision in the pending appeal is contained in the brief.

(3) *Status of Claims*

The statement of the status of the claims contained in the brief is correct.

(4) *Status of Amendments After Final*

No amendment after final has been filed.

(5) *Summary of Invention*

The summary of invention contained in the brief is essentially correct, except that the initial or first stage latex polymer may also be a polymer (or homopolymer) as denoted by "(co)polymer" in claim 1.

(6) *Issues*

No specific statement of the issues is recited in the appellant's brief. The issues are as follows:

1) Whether or not claims 1-4 are anticipated under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) by or, in the alternative, unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Tuzuki et al. (USPN 4,179,481).

2) Whether or not claims 1-4 are anticipated under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) by or, in the alternative, unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Matsuba et al. (US 5,093,420).

3) Whether or not claims 1-4 are anticipated under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) by or, in the alternative, unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Matsuba et al. (EP 392 465)

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4) Whether or not claims 1-4 are anticipated under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) by or, in the alternative, unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over GB 1378434.

The rejections based on Kishida et al. are hereby withdrawn in view of appellant's arguments.

(7) Grouping of Claims

The rejection of claims 1-4 stand or fall together because appellant's brief does not include a statement that this grouping of claims does not stand or fall together and reasons in support thereof. See 37 CFR 1.192(c)(7).

(8) Claims Appealed

The copy of the appealed claims contained in the Appendix to the brief is correct.

(9) Prior Art of Record

4,179,481	TUZUKI ET AL.	12-1979
5,093,420	MATSUBA ET AL.	3-1992
EP 392465	MATSUBA ET AL.	10-1992
GB 1378434	-----	12-1974

(10) Grounds of Rejection

The following ground(s) of rejection are applicable to the appealed claims:

In col. 1, lines 10-12 and 55-68 and col. 2, lines 1-16, Tuzuki et al. teach two-stage polymer process additives to vinyl chloride resins, in concentrations of 0.1 to 100 parts per 100 parts of PVC, obtained by polymerizing

1 to 50 parts by weight of a monomer (II) comprising

0 to 40 % by weight of methyl methacrylate, and

51 to 100 % by weight of a monomer selected from a methacrylate ester, excluding methyl methacrylate, or an acrylate ester,

in the presence of a latex of a (co)polymer obtained by polymerizing in emulsion 99 to 50 parts by weight of a monomer mixture (I) comprising

85.71 to 100% by weight of methyl methacrylate,

the balance of other monomers except methacrylate ester,

wherein the total amount of (I) and (II) is 100 parts by weight.

Further, in col. 3, lines 35-45 and col. 6, lines 4-9, Tuzuki et al. teach that it is advantageous for the final two-stage (composite) polymers to preferably have specific viscosities of at least 0.5 and that additives such as foaming agents (blowing agents) may be added to the vinyl chloride resins.

Matsuba et al. [(US' col. 2, lines 42-68 and col. 3, lines 1-12) or (EP' page 3, lines 10-21)] teach two-stage polymer process additives to vinyl chloride resins, in concentrations of 0.1 to 30 parts per 100 parts of PVC, obtained by polymerizing

5 to 40 parts by weight of a monomer (B) comprising

0 to 40 % by weight of methyl methacrylate or other vinyl monomers, and

20 to 80 % by weight of a monomer selected from a methacrylate ester, excluding methyl methacrylate, or an acrylate ester,

in the presence of a latex of a (co)polymer obtained by polymerizing in emulsion 60 to 95 parts by weight of a monomer mixture (A) comprising

50 to 95% by weight of methyl methacrylate,

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5 to 50 % by weight of at least one C₂ to C₈ methacrylate ester
(excluding methyl methacrylate), and

and 0 to 20 % by weight of a vinyl monomer copolymerizable
therewith,

wherein the total amount of (A) and (B) is 100 parts by weight, and
wherein the final two-stage polymer has a specific viscosity of 1 or more.

Matsuba et al. [(US' col. 6, lines 60-65) or (EP' page 5, lines 39-41)] further
teach that additives such as foaming agents (blowing agents) may be added to the vinyl
chloride resins.

In page 2, lines 60-86 and the examples, GB 1378434 teach two-stage
polymer process additives to vinyl chloride resins, in concentrations of 0.1 to 100 parts
per 100 parts of PVC, obtained by polymerizing

1 to 50 parts by weight of a monomer (II) comprising

80 to 100% of a monomer selected from a methacrylate ester,
excluding methyl methacrylate, or an acrylate ester,

0 to 20 % by weight of other copolymerizable monomers,

in the presence of a latex of a (co)polymer obtained by polymerizing in
emulsion 99 to 50 parts by weight of a monomer mixture (I) comprising
over 50% of methyl methacrylate,

the balance of other monomers except methacrylate ester,

wherein the total amount of (I) and (II) is 100 parts by weight, and

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Further, in page 2, lines 107-111, and page 3, lines 94-98, GB 1378434 teaches that the final two-stage polymers should advantageously have specific viscosities of at least 0.5 and that additives such as foaming agents (blowing agents) may be added to the vinyl chloride resins.

While Tuzuki et al., Matsuba et al. or GB 1378434 do not expressly teach the specific viscosity of the seed or first stage latex (co)polymers, it is reasonable that the viscosity of the seed or first stage latexes of the prior art would possess the presently claimed specific viscosities given the composition and preparation of the polymers are essentially the same as in the claimed composition. The USPTO does not have at its disposal the tools or facilities deemed necessary to make physical determinations of the sort.

In any event, the specific viscosity of the present final stage processing aid is taught in the prior art to be at least 0.5. Therefore, the prior art final stage processing aid is the same as the presently claimed final stage processing aid. The patentability of the product does not depend on its method of production, so an otherwise old composition is still not patentable regardless of any new or unexpected properties or process for preparing it. In re Fitzgerald et al , 619 F.2d 67, 205 USPQ 594 (CCPA 1980). See MPEP § 2112 - § 2112.02. See In re Marosi, 218 USPQ 289 (Fed. Cir. 1983) and In re Thorpe, 227 USPQ 964 (Fed. Cir. 1985). See also MPEP § 2113.

Even if assuming that the prior art references do not meet the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 102, it would still have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, at the time

the invention was made, to arrive at the same inventive composition because the disclosure of the inventive subject matter appears within the generic disclosure of the prior art.

(11) Response to Argument

Appellant argues that “[b]ecause the prior art discloses a range that overlaps the claimed range, but no specific examples falling within the claimed range are disclosed, Appellant submits that a case-by-case determination must be made as to anticipation.” Appellant then continues by stating that “[I]n light of the limited specific viscosity teachings of the cited references, Appellant submits that the claimed range is not disclosed with sufficient specificity in the cited references.”

Firstly, each of Tuzuki et al. (col. 3, lines 41-45) and GB 1378434 (page 2, lines 107-111), individually teach the exact same specific viscously claimed by appellant of “at least 0.5” and Matsuba et al., in each of the abstracts, specifically recite the specific viscously 1, which is “at least 0.5”. Therefore, appellant’s arguments are not apposite. The claimed specific viscously for the final product is clearly taught by each of the cited prior art.

Regarding the arguments “under 103”, Appellant’s argument of unexpected result with regard to the final product are not persuasive since **the final product**, including it’s required specific viscosity, **is taught by each of the prior art references**. The specific viscosities of the prior art processing aids are **not** outside of the range taught by Appellant (see above).

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Appellant's declarations neither demonstrates that the prior art first stage latex polymers would not have had the claimed specific viscosities, nor does it demonstrate, even if it did have differing specific viscosities, that this would have resulting in different final processing aid polymer product. None of Appellant's "Comparative Examples" are representative of the prior art processing aids or their specific viscosities, each of which is taught to be at least 0.5.

For the above reasons, it is believed that the rejections should be sustained.

Respectfully submitted,

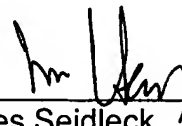


KCE
January 18, 2005

Conferees



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